

THE MESSAGE OF THE FLYING ANGEL

THE CRYING NEED IN EVERY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN ACTIVITY IS RIGHT IDEA

EPITOME OF THE GOSPEL

Life Only Takes on Cheer and Charm
When It Feels Itself Linked to the
Eternal Love, Says Preacher.

"The Message of the Flying Angel" was the theme of Rev. Dr. Sturges' sermon last Sunday night, who used as his text the following passage from Revelation XIV, 4: "And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue and people." Dr. Sturges said:

God has a plan that sweeps in the whole world, and these words of the revelator—which we have chosen as our textual thought—are a prophecy of a seasons ministry to be carried on by God for the conversion of all nations. He has provided for the salvation of all men, and has ordained that the message of salvation shall be preached by men called to that service, and when the people hear it and accept it, repenting of their sins and asking God to forgive them, He pardons them and gives them the spirit of adoption, makes them new creatures in Christ Jesus, and they are received into Christ's Kingdom. I say Kingdom, not church.

Now while I am not disposed to question God's desire in the matter that the two situations should include the same person, nevertheless, I am persuaded to believe that not all who are in the church are in the Kingdom, nor all who are in the Kingdom are in the church. Christ to His day is clothed with human and "woolly" sheep I have which are not of this fold." And it will always be so long as there are ungodly men administer the affairs of the church, for the crafts and imperfections in the human element become visible in it impossible for the number far exceeding the chosen only souls are in the Kingdom. But God has ordained this divine and human instrumentality, the church, as the agency for bringing men into the Kingdom. He has called men from the pinnacles of every day human life and set them apart as ministers to proclaim the gospel and secure the salvation of the lost. And, oh what honor, what worth and dignity—has God put upon us mortals that he should call us to His service and make us His workers with him in the salvation of a race! How cheap and trivial all other labors seem, as compared with such toll as secures the eternal wealth for the souls of men!

The Scheme of Man's Redemption.
The angel which John saw—as revealed in our textual thoughts—was a "messenger" of salvation, a preacher of the gospel, a gospel which involves the whole scheme of man's redemption through the atoning power of Jesus Christ. Although the scriptures say nothing of "schemes" or "attempts" I assume that any conception you may have of the gospel will at least satisfy your mind while we are considering this message of the revelator and what it implies and involves.

The messenger of salvation need not be necessarily an ordained minister. The glory of our faith is that every saved soul is privileged to save, if it be a matter of God's calling, he chooses men who have experienced in their lives the gospel which they are called to preach. Such messengers say: "What we have felt and seen declare unto you." Every believer is to become a glad proclaimer of the truth which found and saved him. Responsibility coincides with ability. The messengers of the message—the "angels" in John's vision—and any man or woman, old little child, who can tell "the old story of Jesus and His love," is to serve and save according to his or her ability.

Just at this point I would like to call your especial attention to this fact that there are at least five deep seated needs in the lives of men and women in the world of today—and of every day—and that the gospel of the Lord Christ most adequately supplies those needs.

First. The crying need of the home in every department of human

activity, is a right idea of God. When that is obscure, everything else is awry. All confused, crooked and precipitated all human woes and sorrows can be traced to false conceptions of God. It is necessary therefore to cultivate straight thinking on this subject.

Take, if you please, this simple proposition. Every cleavage in the spiritual separation between brethren which has happened among Christians from the Lord's departure until this day, has been the fruit of somebody's wrong idea of God. If an follower of Jesus Christ had understood him and his message—in which there is not the slightest seed or germ of division—if the will of God had been perfectly done from the time of the apostles until now, there would be no intolerable sectarian distinction in the Christian world today, but just one undivided church as there was on the day of Pentecost. So we are justified in saying that the church in its present state of cleavage does not reflect divine purpose but rather insufficient understandings or insufficient understanding to God on the part of those who should have put aside their spirit of higher-than-them Pharisaism and by prayerful effort strive to understand and appreciate one another's tenets, while laboring together to enlarge the bounds of Christian liberty and reduce the excesses of ecclesiastical law.

The man out of harmony with God thus rises as a paradox. There is a sense in which man can see only with a duplex vision. Take, for instance, in nature. We may behold the evidence of his wisdom, design, power and immensity, but nature is working according to the rule of antithesis. In the history of creation the good and the bad march side by side, now producing the transient blossoms amid the poisonous plants, the hills. The bad streak of lightning shatters the rocks where the tree has sheltered. The friendly fire warms the frozen limb of a mendicant child, and then becomes the appalling fire to the city where acres of blocks are destroyed while thousands of her inmates in habitants wade knee-deep through ashes. The same is true of water that makes the thirst of scattered nations and their thirsts through banks at flood-tide, carrying everything in its way down to destruction.

The Highway of Divine Harmony.
Now the same thing to discover in nature seems to be discovered in God. Within his Kingdom are hell and heaven. It is not a place, however, with either of these elements but a state, a condition where upon life the highway of divine harmony. Let us be clear about this and let us not blanch, unless we disagree with the wisdom of human liberty.

The answer of the man who said, if he believed in hell—replied "I do believe in it. I know it, because Lam in it." Is a terse statement of what may be called the modern view of punishment for sin. And in this connection I am prepared to affirm, that it is not a punishment which is inflicted; it is a punishment which is brought on in man's nature and is a thousand fold more terrible than the conception of hell as a place of external torment, and the most terrible aspect of it all is that it is inflicted upon himself, a consequence of his own life.

The crooked thinking of man, and the dogmatic insistence on points obviously unconnected with the birth of Christ's life, is the reason why God seems to have good and evil among his attributes. But when man swings into complete harmony with God, sets itself in tune with the infinite, then the apparent contradictions of the Almighty will vanish. Here is the golden Key in theology which unlocks the door in the true character of God. Listen! "Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

In the bible we have given to us clearer views of God's mind and heart, as we see them how to see that this old world of ours needs—more than anything else—the peace which will set the conscience at rest. Everywhere there is the agonizing sense of peace, that element in it was sung out by the angel hosts over the

earth, "Peace on earth, good will to men."—and knowledge which others and helps us—aside from what we have heard in the Lord Christ Jesus says of himself. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." If we would know how God feels toward sin and sorrow, listen to the Master and see how he continually talks big acts. As Jesus lived and lived we God lives and loves. Even in the light of Jesus which ought to have dispelled all such darkness—men have held, and still hold, wrong notions of God. They think of him as angry, and needing to be placated, that he needs to be reconciled to us, whereas, the truth is that he is "an messenger, that he gave his son to die for us, God sends his messenger, pleading with us to be reconciled to him. He is reconciled. He wants us to be. He loves us. He wants us to have him. He wants us to come home. The whole message of God to man, as revealed in the New Testament Scriptures, may be compressed into this simple yet love-compelling sentence, "God loves us and wants us to come home."

Sometimes again I read in my church paper a notice sent out widely through this part of the country—that a mother wanted her wayward girl to return home; that love and forgiveness awaited her. I know a home where a plate is always set at the table, and where the bedroom is always in order, with a light burning at night, to await the return of a prodigal boy. Now that is a picture of God's heart. Oh, if the world could only know how God longs and yearns for the love of human hearts, men could not long refuse to yield to him their love and their life.

Running Afarward the Purpose of God.

Second. The world needs to know the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and that need is supplied in the gospel message. It is easy to think lightly of sin when we forget the cross. But when we behold Jesus on Calvary, and know that it is for us he is suffering, and for love of us is dying, then we catch a glimpse of the horror and crime of sinfulness. It is comparatively easy for friends, to secure from men a confession of their sins and the very indifferent manner in which they acknowledge them, deceives the fact that they have no just conception of the great magnitude of sin. They pride themselves on keeping the laws of men. They keep the civil laws and boast that they are "law-abiding citizens" and yet without a tremor of the lips, or a blush, confess to those things which involve the fact that they break the divine laws that they regulate the divine claims that they have no desire to seek for divine pardon, nor do they need to seek the atonement for their sins through the blood of Christ. Men burdened with sin, and whose bodies are a walking charred house of corruption go to sleep at night with no concern whatever about their souls, and the awful destiny that awaits the man who is a continual transgressor of the laws of God.

This strange anomaly can only be accounted for on the theory that they are utterly lacking in anything like an adequate conception of what sin is or how damning it affords its consequences. And it is just here in the gospel that we come to see what sin does for each individual; what it does for you and for me. It is in the gospel where men catch glimpses of the way in which God regards it. There is nothing he hates so much. In the light of the gospel we see how sin has broken human hearts, dashed human hopes, opened human graves, damned human souls and sent men as perverse intruders into outer banishment from God—a fate that was never intended only for the devil and his angels. And when once we catch sight of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and how it narts the heart of infinite love to repudiate and break his law, and return awharward the purpose which God has for every human life, then will we begin to see how much we need a Savior mighty enough to save us from the accusation of an evil conscience.

The Need of Some Great Inspiration.

Third. The world needs pardon and peace. No one who knows the heart of humanity fails to see that this old world of ours needs—more than anything else—the peace which will set the conscience at rest. Everywhere there is the agonizing sense of peace, that element in it was sung out by the angel hosts over the

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Fourth. The gospel is just suited to the varied experiences of life. There is no joy, no sorrow, no calm, no halcyon. There is no sorrow if cannot assuage. There is no peace if cannot relieve. There is no weakness it cannot help. There is no temptation for which it cannot afford a way of escape.

Prof. Brummond, riding on the box with his coachman of his horses with the purpose of speaking some word to him about his drinking habits, noting the horses' tongues and hearing the better of the driver, said: "If you had been unable to control them, John, and knew that I was able, what would you have done?" The coachman replied: "I would have given you the reins, Sir." "Well," said the professor, "you tell me this habit of yours has become too strong for you, that you can't control it, suppose you suppose you hand the reins to Jesus Christ." The word went home, and six years afterward, when Professor Brummond visited the place—he had the satisfaction of finding the coachman still at his post, and of hearing that all through the years he had never once yielded to the enemy.

That every life needs some great inspiration goes, I apprehend, without saying. It is for lack of it that we see so much of humdrum failure and unhappiness in human lives. No wonder so many grow weary and disgusted with living, when their lives are so barren and monotonous with heavy, unremitting toil. Not only in the monotony of life however—when days come and go, bringing no joy and affording no relief from the terrible drag and drudge—is there need of some power outside of and above one, which is mighty to uplift and inspire, but in the unusual exigencies and trials of life, one must have some such pull on the soul, else he will utterly despair.

Captain Greycuts tells that, while he was a prisoner on Devil's Island, with the thermometer at 130 degrees fahrenheit, tormented by vermin, every moment under the eye of a vicious guard—all letters from friends and loved ones denied him—and told repeatedly that his wife and children had repudiated him, he would have utterly despaired and, if possible, taken his own life, but he knew—contrary to all the lies told him that his wife and little ones were true to him, and that their love reached him across 4,000 miles of land and sea; and it was this that held him steady and preserved him and kept him from going insane. If human love—such as the case makes of separation—can thus stay and inspire the soul, how much can and does God reach our human spirit and life us above the intrigues of foes, and the very fires of worms, and thus keep us strong and true, when, otherwise, we would despair.

The tragedies in human life all about us can be traced to the lack of some such saving inspiration as I have thus outlined. The strongest of us—as well as the weakest—need just such promise of help and hope when the dull road leads us over the waste places in life, as well as when it leads up to the frowning cliffs which seem

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all but impossible. Life only takes "eternal" on one hand, "now" on the other. "Live hereafter?" is the interrogation that visions itself constantly before our minds. Listen! in the gospel we hear Him, who says, "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me shall never die."

A little child was weak and ill-sleeping when his father took her in his strong arms. When she opened her eyes again she was in a beautiful room, bright and sweet and around her were her loved ones. Home again! It is thus that the kind heavenly Father will take his weak, ailing children, and in his strong, tender arms bear them gently and safely through the darkness of death into eternal life.

See our return from Europe, see "Continued on Page Eleven."

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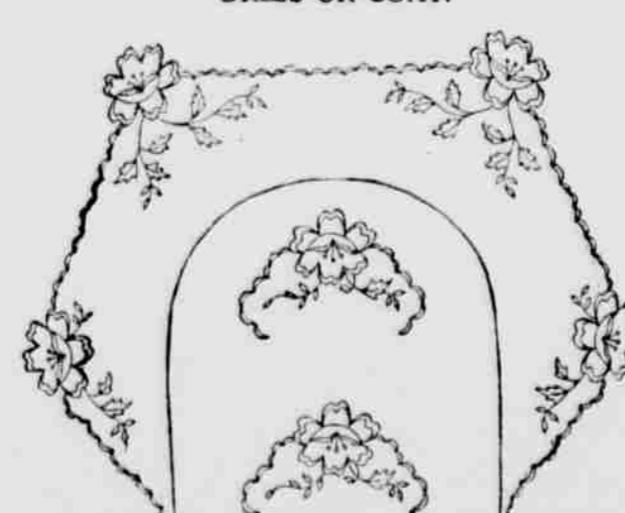


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